

AGENDA # 6

City of Madison, Wisconsin

REPORT OF: LANDMARKS COMMISSION

PRESENTED: 3/7/22

TITLE: Judge Doyle Square Development
Adjacent to a Designated Madison
Landmark (Fess Hotel - 123 E Doty
St); 4th Ald. Dist.

REFERRED:

REREFERRED:

REPORTED BACK:

AUTHOR: Heather Bailey, Preservation Planner

ADOPTED:

POF:

DATED: 3/8/22

ID NUMBER: 70054

Members present were: Anna Andrzejewski, Richard Arnesen, Katie Kaliszewski, and Maurice Taylor.
Excused were: Ald. Arvina Martin and David McLean.

SUMMARY:

Nate Gundrum, registering in support and wishing to speak

Aaron Ebent, registering in support and wishing to speak

JP Beitler, registering in support and available to answer questions

Nate Gundrum said that Mortenson is the owner/developer/builder for the Judge Doyle Square hotel project adjacent to this site, which is starting construction at the end of March. They are now turning their attention to the apartments, which are the final phase of the project. They said that this project already has a GDP/SIP approval in place, though it is likely five years old at this point. At that time, the project had been proposed as a modern all-glass tower, and the project team is now going through a major alteration process with the City in order to amend the design so that it better fits in the context of the neighborhood and responds better to the development across S Pinckney Street and the design approved for the hotel. They said the Fess Hotel sign was a surprise uncovered after the demolition of the Government East parking ramp, so they have tried to design the building in a way that preserves the site lines to that sign. They requested feedback on the building's relation to that sign because it will have a big impact on the building design, especially at the ground floor.

Aaron Ebent, project designer from Kahler Slater, showed photos of the site as it exists. They said that the adjacent hotel will be a mix of various metal colors and textures with punched openings; it is a podium building with a concrete first floor and metal stud framing above. They intend to use a similar construction typology for the apartment building, but they have not designed it yet. They showed concept plans for the apartment building with underground parking, the primary resident entry on the Doty Street level, which is one level above the Wilson Street level, and residential levels above with an amenity level on the top floor. There would be a total of 11 levels above the underground parking, and they intend to build up to the Capitol height limit. The edge of the proposed tower is 12 feet off the edge of the Fess Hotel building, and the previously approved project for the site was 9 feet away from the Fess Hotel building, so they have set it back a bit more to allow breathing room. The façade on the Doty Street elevation is in plane with the Fess Hotel, and a smaller piece would be set back next to the Fess Hotel. They provided perspectives showing the general scale and massing of the building, along with a view of the Fess Hotel sign on Doty Street where that area of the building is set back 16 feet to expose the sign. The apartment lobby is located there, along with some green space in front of the sign.

Andrzejewski asked about dates the previous project was approved. Bailey said that it was more than three years ago and provided a summary of the Landmarks Commission's comments from the minutes. She said that the commission acknowledged there was some separation from the Fess Hotel building, but she noted that was before the wall sign was uncovered. She said the commission seemed to have the largest concerns about the proposed building materials because the glass and other materials didn't relate to the materials used in the adjacent landmark. The commission ended up concluding that there wasn't a language where the two buildings were speaking to each other architecturally, but the proposed materiality was found in the downtown core so it would make sense in the streetscape. She said that the new proposal provides more separation and pulling back on the corner where the sign will remain, and they are changing the materiality.

Arnesen asked if the retaining wall was on the applicants' property and if so, whether it will remain. Gundrum said that it is on their property, and they don't know if it will remain. They said that if they move forward with the parking solution presented tonight, they would need to remove the retaining wall.

Arnesen asked where move ins will happen. Gundrum said there is a separate loading area on the Wilson Street frontage.

Andrzejewski asked if the applicants had thought about materials. Ebent said that they were not considering an all-glass façade like what had previously been approved. They said they are proposing a different construction type, a structural metal stud solution, so the exterior walls would largely be bearing walls, which means they can't be wide open with a lot of glass. They said the nature of the project and construction type will lend itself to a punched window scenario like on the adjacent future hotel and NoVo building on S Pinckney Street. They said that with the structural metal stud solution, they also have a limited ability to put heavy materials on it, such as brick or stone, so they would need to use lighter materials. They said that energy consciousness is also important, and while all glass is sleek, it probably isn't the right response for this building.

Kaliszewski said that she appreciated the building being moved away from the Fess Hotel so the sign will be visible. She said that she had concerns about the cladding, and while she understood arguments about glass buildings not being energy efficient, she worried about the amount of metal next to the historic brick buildings being visually intrusive. She said that glass would allow it to step back or blend into the background. Ebent said there were other materials they could use, like fiber cement products. Andrzejewski agreed with Kaliszewski's concerns about materials.

Arnesen said that he wasn't overly concerned about materials other than recommending the applicants use materials of a high quality. He said that he was hopeful the quality of materials would be appropriate for this location, and the higher the quality, the more they will reflect appropriately on the Fess Hotel regardless of what type of materials they are.

Taylor said that he wasn't concerned about the materials, and he thought the 12 foot setback from the Fess Hotel sign would help.

Andrzejewski summarized that materials matter, and the commission is grateful for the breathing space for the sign and at street level.

ACTION:

No action was taken.